GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
FINANCE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2085
ANSWERED ON:05.08.2005
SPEEDY CLEARANCE AT CUSTOMS
Chakraborty Shri Ajay

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government recognizes that Air Expresses/Courier Industry acts as a catalyst for the speedy growth of internal and international Trade and Commerce;

(b) if so, whether the Government is aware of the fact regarding the enormous delay that takes place in custom clearance in various international Airports;

(c) whether the Government is aware of the Immediate Release Guidelines for Air Express Consignments issued by the World Customs Organisation;

(d) if so, whether the Government intends to adhere to that or is considering to formulate its own different policy for speedy clearance;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) likely time frame for implementing the policy?

Answer

MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S. S. PALANIMANICKAM)

(a) Yes Sir, Air Expresses/Courier Industry assist in the growth of Trade and Commerce.

(b) The clearance of the cargo is done expedi-tiously in various international Airports. Further, Government has initiated an automation project for clearance of goods through courier, which is expected to make cargo clearances even faster.

(c) Yes Sir, the World Customs Organisation has issued Guidelines for the Immediate Release of Consignments by Customs. The Guidelines apply equally to all consignments including air express consignments.

(d) The Government already has a policy of facilitating trade and ensuring speedy clearance of all consignments in a way which does not jeopardize government revenue or national security.

(e) and (f) Many of the provisions recommended by the said Guidelines issued in 2003 such as the de minimum provision (non levy of duty below certain amount), provision for immediate release of correspondence and documents having no commercial value without payment of customs duty on the basis of the accompanying declarations, immediate release of low value consignments such as gifts and samples on the basis of a consolidated declarations have been in existence in India for a long time even before the issue of said Guidelines. The Government further intends to bring down the dwell time for cargo clearance which will facilitate trade.